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# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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## *House of Representatives*

# RETURNING THE BELLS OF BALANGIGA TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE!

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently reintroduced my bill, H. Con. Res. 18, which urges the President to authorize the transfer of ownership to the Philippines of the bells taken in 1901 from the town of Balangiga in the Philippines. The bells are currently displayed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In the 110 years since the taking of the bells occurred, the citizens of the United States and the Philippines have shared many historic and political ties. The Philippines was a staunch ally of the United States during World War II. Brave Filipino soldiers were drafted into service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, fought side-by-side with American soldiers, and were instrumental in the successful outcome of World War II. Filipino soldiers also fought

alongside our soldiers on the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam.

Since the independence of the Philippines in 1946, the U.S. - Philippine relationship has been largely one of friendship and cooperation. The Philippines is a republic patterned basically on our own system of government. The Philippines is a valuable trading partner of the U.S. and an ally in the war against terrorism. Approximately 2.9 million Americans are of Filipino descent and close to 250,000 United States citizens reside in the Philippines. The acts of conflict that surrounded the taking of the bells of Balangiga are not consistent with the friendship that is currently an integral part of the relationship between our two nations.

The Republic of the Philippines has repeatedly requested the return of the bells. They are an important symbol to the Filipino people, who wish to have them re-installed in the belfry of the Balangiga Church. I believe that it is time to resolve this situation in order to solidify the bonds between our two nations. My resolution would honor and promote the positive relationship our countries enjoy.

As the years pass, I am confident that relations between our two nations will grow even stronger. To that end, the United States Government which has final disposition over the bells of Balangiga should transfer ownership of the bells to the people of the Philippines as a measure of good will and cooperation.